

# THE Message



SAINT  
MARK

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SEPT-OCT 2017



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## SAINT MARK SUMMER CAMP SEASON 2017



Once again, during the first week of summer vacation the Saint Mark parish held its annual summer camp program. The 2017 session proved to be another huge success! The Church grounds absolutely came alive, as the property was filled with joy and excitement, with water slides, sports, crafts, and a deepening of faith. The excitement did not end there because soon afterwards a bus of nearly 30 GOYANs and staff headed to Saint Stephen's Camp at the Diakonia Retreat Center in South Carolina. There they spent an unforgettable week making new friends and reconnecting with God.

More Summer Camp Coverage on Page 11 and the Back Page

## METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA CLERGY-LAITY



During the end of June, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta held its Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress in Raleigh, NC. Along with Fr. Mark and Presbytera Anastasia, Fr. Steven, Emmanuel Manos, Pam Parent, and Pat Sourlis represented our Saint Mark family. During the proceedings there, His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios honored Saint Mark, by appointing Fr. Mark and John Koutsoupis to the Metropolis Council, and Presbytera Anastasia and Pam Parent to the Metropolis Philoptochos Board.

The Message is an in-print outreach to the Orthodox Christian community of Boca Raton and the greater South Florida region. This publication aims to inform, edify, and serve as a witness to its readers of the Truth of Jesus Christ as confirmed in the Holy Gospel.

The Message is a ministry of:



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 Rev. Fr. Steven Klund, Associate  
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**Choir:** Virginia Barnes

**Chanters:** Art Poly, Ramona Bean, George Demopoulos

**Ushers:** Tim Sharp

**Acolytes:**

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**Church School:**

Helen Lang & Julie Vagelos

**JOY:** Despina Hantzaridis, Vivian Lazaridis, and Erin & Rick Kontos

**GOYA:** Dominique Cultrera, Elaine Cotronakis, Lynn & Costa Athan, Angela & Girard Mitchell, Nicole Pelekanos

**Seniors:** Diane Paterakis

**Syrtaki:**

Jenny Saiger & Tasia Christakis

**Greek School:** Anna Kaiser

**Bookstore:** Yvette Koutsoupis, Barbara Tasiounes, Stella Pores

**Welcome:** Elaine Zographus

**Readers:** Ted Vagelos

**The Message:** Fr. Steven Klund

**Live Streaming:**

Ted Vagelos & Nick Csakany

**Audio:** Tom Spiliopoulos



Recently one of our very own from Saint Mark, Juliana Leondis, took part in a summer IOCC mission trip to the Bahamas. For a whole week Juliana spent her time and efforts in helping to build and repair the home of a local family there. Included below is a summary, in Juliana's own words about her experience working with IOCC:

During Lent, I was inspired to offer myself more deeply for someone in need. Over the next few weeks, I started researching and came to the web-site of IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities). Their mission is "in the spirit of Christ's love, offer emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to respond."

This past summer I had the opportunity to participate in an IOCC Mission to Nassau, Bahamas, on one of their Domestic Home Build programs. We were tasked with repairing the roof of Mary, a cancer survivor currently undergoing treatment. Her home was destroyed by Hurricane Matthew last year, and she and her family have been living in a home that is constantly leaking in every room except for one. Her extended family, children and grandchildren, as well as herself all slept in one room.

Thanks to the IOCC team and our partner Bahamas Methodist Habitat, we were able to completely re-build her roof. We ripped out the old rotted plywood and shingles, and replaced the entire roof with new materials. We spent a minimum of 8 hours per day from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, on a roof in 100 degree heat, for the week.

While the work was demanding, it was such a blessing for me personally, for I knew that we were doing something special to someone in need. While we spent time with the physical materials of the repair, more importantly, we were able to share our faith with Mary's children and grandchildren

on a daily basis.

Now Mary and her family could live comfortably in their home. This was an experience that I am so blessed and thankful that I was able to be a part of. While participating in this trip I was able to meet so many amazing people. Speaking for all of the team members, I can say that our faith grew tremendously through this truly life changing experience, which I am so grateful for participating in. I thank all of those who partnered with me on this journey and helped support IOCC financially and with their prayers.



We are so proud of Juliana, and we pray that her efforts will inspire the future generations of missionaries from Saint Mark!

**KRISTINA'S RETURN TO ALASKA**

Last summer our own Kristina Koutsoupis took part in an OCMC mission trip to Alaska. For ten days Kristina spent her time and efforts in helping to lead an annual youth camp in Kwethluk as well as a young adult retreat in Napaskiak.



The trip made quite the impression on Kristina, so much so that she decided to return to assist with this year's camp as well! She and a team of half-a-dozen others, helped



teach the youth and young adults about the Orthodox faith and how it can relate to their everyday lives as young believers in Alaska.



## PASTORAL MESSAGE

# *Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis*

My dear faithful,

What a beautiful time of the year: families have returned from vacation; children are back in school; we just honored the Theotokos with the “15 days”; and now we draw our attention on the new ecclesiastical year. Each year, we are afforded the opportunity to strengthen our relationship with Christ and His Church. At Saint Mark, we have a wonderful array of ministries and educational programs that enhance our spiritual lives. But the truth of the matter is it all starts with WORSHIP. I remember fondly my professor at seminary, Father Calivas, telling us: “The Church is first and foremost a worshipping community.” No matter how great and engaging our programs are, if worship is not the center of our Church, than we are missing the mark.

Saint Nicholas Cabasilas wrote in the 14th century about the experience of the Sacraments: “Those who become participants in the Sacraments are reborn and recreated spiritually and in a unique and exceptions way are joined and united with the Savior. This wonderful action of the Sacrament is what Saint Paul had in mind when he preached on Mars Hill to the Athenians that “in Him we live and move and has our being’ (Acts 17:28).” Living a Sacramental life is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. We are all called to fully participate in the Sacraments of the Church on a regular and meaningful basis, allowing us to be transformed by Jesus Christ.

This year, make an effort to participate fully in the Sacramental life of the Church. Here are a few encouraging tips for the upcoming year:

1. *Fast & Feast: Fast at the appropriate times...rejoice and feast when appropriate.*
2. *Prepare yourselves often - receive the Eucharist weekly.*
3. *Ask for forgiveness in your private prayers; schedule the Sacrament of Confession.*
4. *Attend one “extra” Church service each week if possible — go grow closer to Him.*
5. *Be compassionate daily!*

Living a sacramental life is our calling! Try your best to make this new ecclesiastical year a time to grow closer to our Lord, allowing Him to transform your lives. The Clergy are always here to guide, inspire, strengthen and encourage you on your path. Don't be afraid to ask!!!

With all of our prayers for a blessed and inspirational year, I remain,

*+ Fr. Mark Leondis*  
Father Mark Leondis, Pastor

**75%** of the Saint Mark budget comes from **STEWARDSHIP**. Without you filling out your stewardship pledge envelope each and every year, we cannot exist. Everything we possess are gifts from God and they ultimately belong to Him. They are given to us — by Him. If you haven't filled out your 2017 stewardship pledge envelope — please, do so today (they are located in the pews). “God loves a cheerful giver.” - (2 Cor. 9:7)

## 2017 SAINT MARK MINISTRY REGISTRATION

The new ecclesiastical year is just around the corner, which means that soon all of our ministries will be in full force once again. We anticipate another loaded calendar with tons of exciting events. To prepare for it, we are holding registration for all of our ministries in the Fellowship Hall after Liturgy during the four Sundays leading up to our “welcome back” parish breakfast on September 10. In the hall you will find tables set up with banners, information, and registration forms for the various ministries we offer.

Please be advised that our Saint Mark ministries are reserved for our families who are in good standing with thier stewardship. For those who are not in good standing, there will be a table set up at the entrance to the Fellowship Hall where you will be able to renew your stewardship pledges for the upcoming year.

We are confident that 2017-2018 will be another incredible year filled with spiritual growth, service, fellowship and lots of fun. We invite you to join us, and experience all that the Saint Mark family has to offer!



# OUR CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

LIL CAMPAYNO

**M**y name is Lil (Lubov) Campayno, and I experienced a “miracle” from God. I want to share my story so that perhaps others could be inspired or helped in some way. My husband, Ron, and I have lived in Floral Lakes in Delray Beach for the last 20 years or so. As I write this article, I am looking out across the small lake behind our home. Beyond the lake is a Rescue Station. Had this rescue station not been there (or even just another block farther down the road), I would not be alive today.

2016 was a rough year medically for me in that I was extremely nauseous from June until December. On December 8, I had an operation to remove my gallbladder as per the recommendations of my doctors. I was discharged from the hospital two hours after surgery. After returning home, I went directly to bed. I started feel “funny”, nothing I had ever experienced before. Shortly after, I screamed for Ron and told him to call 911, as I had fallen on the floor and could not get up. The last thing I remember was a man from EMS calling for backup. Then totally “black”.

I had given a few phone numbers to my good friend and neighbor, Diana, to call after the surgery so that Ron would only have to make one call. Diana would call my family. On the back of this paper I wrote “In case this goes south, please call Father Mark, Father Steven or Dawn at Saint Mark”. Little did I know.

Diana saw the Rescue trucks at our home and immediately ran to see what had happened and to be of help to Ron. My heart had stopped on my bedroom floor and the paramedics worked on me for quite a while, with my husband watching them trying to revive me. They got my heart started and I was taken to the hospital. It took EMS about 2 minutes to arrive and to resuscitate me from the rescue station behind my home. If it had taken them longer, it would have been too late. I truly believe that God directs our lives, as is evidenced by the fact we purchased a home only minutes away from a Rescue Station.

We eventually discovered that I had bled out after my gallbladder surgery. An artery that had been clipped failed to hold. Diana took Ron to the ER and alerted my son who drove in from Port St. Lucie. Father Mark and Father Steven both came to the hospital and took shifts providing prayer, comfort and support that night, which was much needed.

Long story short, I was in a coma for 15 days, all of my major organs had failed, my lung collapsed, my kidneys failed and I was on dialysis. My son received a call at 11:30 one night that I had two brain bleeds, one the left side and one on the right side of my brain. The outlook was extremely poor. The doctors told my family that nothing could be done for me. They should begin funeral preparations.

Plans were underway to move me to Hospice, but two days before Christmas, I was given the greatest gift, a second chance at life! Inexplicably, on December 23, 2016 I woke up and started breathing on my own! There is no medical explanation, only a miracle.

When I awoke, I couldn't move or speak. I remember family members being there – Ron, Todd, Gretchen, Tori, Mark and Diana. I remember Father Mark encouraging me to fight and dig deep. My family, friends and the faithful of Saint Mark were all praying for me and I needed every bit of it! I was extremely afraid of what this new chapter of my life had

become. But I knew that I had to be strong, and the support from Saint Mark and my family and friends helped me find that strength. While in the coma, I have no recollection of anything. I did not know what happened to me and I felt terrible angst over the thought of what Ron had to go through dealing with all of this. I felt incredibly humbled when thinking of the lengths that all my family went to care for me. My entire family came to my side, from my son Todd driving from Port St. Lucie daily, his wife Gretchen supporting him, my sister Pauline, my brother's wife Dukie, to my niece Tammy, who drove from Naples when I was being transferred to rehab.

I spent three months in rehab between, January 4, 2017 until I was discharged on March 1. During that time, I spent a great deal of time in bed, as I was still not able to speak, swallow correctly, or move. I kept thinking that I was a vegetable and worried about what would happen to me.

I had extensive therapy every day – Physical, Speech and Swallowing, and Occupational. The staff was exceptional, encouraging me and pushing me, and I progressed well. I learned how to speak and swallow. I was on a feeding tube for months, before graduating to pureed food and thickened liquid. Eventually, I passed my final swallow test, and could begin to eat “real” food again!

My husband, Ron, was at the hospital/rehab every day for three months, sitting beside me, and encouraging me. I felt such love and support while I was worried about his health through this nightmare. It was extremely difficult to work through the therapy while so tired and weak. Ron and I found a shirt that said “Refuse to Sink,” and that quickly became my “rally cry” or theme for my recovery. But most importantly, I was determined to make the most of this gift of renewed life that God had given me.

It was very emotional to return home on March 1, 2017. Signs and balloons were on the garage door. I walked with a walker at this point and I cried and cried as I entered our home, never expecting to return. The most difficult experience was again going into our bedroom where I technically “died” the first time. I screamed at the top of my lungs while Ron hugged me and kept me from falling. I had made it home, but there was still plenty work left to do on my road back to wellness.

A huge step along that road came a month later. I had not been comfortable leaving home for long periods of time, but I managed to build up enough strength to attend Holy Unction at Saint Mark on Holy Wednesday evening. I cried and cried when I entered Church. I never thought I would “walk” into St. Mark again. Being embraced by the clergy and the entire Saint Mark family gave me such a lift! I feel blessed that I could receive this sacrament of healing. I felt such peace and joy in my heart.

There is no explanation for the fact that I am alive, other than a miracle from God. The medical field could do no more for me. It was God who could and did bring me to this point. I challenge anyone who does not believe in miracles or does not believe in God to look at my life. I am the living, breathing proof that God does exist and that He is good. I thank our Lord multiple times each day for this miracle of life and ask that He make me deserving of it. I pray that He shows me ways to help others. I consider this my new calling, my life's spiritual stewardship. Maybe this is a first step.



**YOUTH MINISTRIES - REGISTRATION OPENS AUG. 20**

We had a fantastic conclusion to our 2016-2017 ministry year these last couple of months. Most notably our camp programs, both here at Saint Mark, and with the Metropolis at Saint Stephen's, highlighted our summer schedule for our youth. Please see the last two pages of this issue to read more about those two weeks respectively.

Coming back now from the summer break, our youth ministry calendars for 2017-2018 are shaping up to quite an exciting year. From JOY events like bowling, caroling, game nights, and olympics; to GOYA favorites like Marlins games, hangouts, movie nights, and the District retreats, every month there will be something to help keep our youth engaged in the faith and having fun while doing so!



If your family is interested in any of our youth offerings please contact the Church office, or stop by our JOY (*elementary school children*) and GOYA (*middle and high school students*) tables during Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall during our four ministry registration Sundays from August 20-September 10. Everyone buckle up, it's going to be another amazing year! For more information please email the following:

**FOR JOY, EMAIL: ERINKONTOS@HOTMAIL.COM**  
**FOR GOYA, EMAIL: DOMINIQUECULTRERAGOYA@GMAIL.COM**

SAINT MARK  
**Mommy + Me**

TUESDAYS @ 10AM (BI-WEEKLY)

Beginning Tuesday, September 12 at 10 am, we will be resuming our Mommy + Me ministry. Now in our fourth year, we look forward to more worship, sing-a-longs, crafts, story-time, and games!

"Mommy + Me" is for all children 4 years old and younger. If you are interested in joining "Mommy + Me," please contact us by email at [office@saintmarkboca.net](mailto:office@saintmarkboca.net) or by phone at 561-994-4822 for more details about our classes.

**SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL - HELEN LANG & JULIE VAGELOS**

The Church School Ministry teachers, substitutes, and volunteers, are enjoying a restful summer, as we plan for the 2017-2018 school year! The Church School Ministry invites all of the Saint Mark children, beginning with the age of four years old, through our graduating high school seniors, to a weekly lesson on the faith, traditions, and practices of our Orthodox faith. Under the direction of Fr. Mark and Fr. Steven, who frequent the classroom to guest lecture as their Sunday schedules permit, our volunteer teachers prepare weekly lessons to provide our children with the fundamental teachings of our faith.

With a full schedule of Church School Ministry classes, lessons, including activities, crafts, and hymns, register your children, in the Church School Ministry, at no charge, and join us as a classroom volunteer!

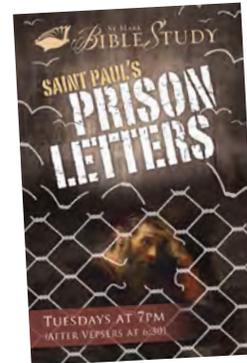
We will see you at registration, beginning on August 20th, and please note, classes begin on Sunday, September, 17th, with the Blessing of the Classrooms, meeting and greeting your child's new teacher, and student orientation in their respective classroom. Church school commences immediately after the sacrament of Holy Communion, which is approximately 11:15 am, and classes end at noon.

We are always looking for parents, grandparents, Godparents, and stewards to volunteer in the classroom, and with the Church School Ministry. Please see Julie or Helen, for additional information.

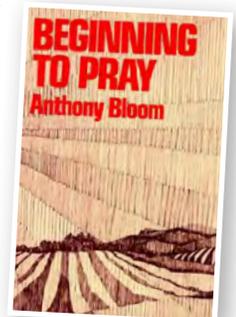
**BIBLE STUDY - TUES @ 7PM & SYNAXIS - THURS @ 11AM**

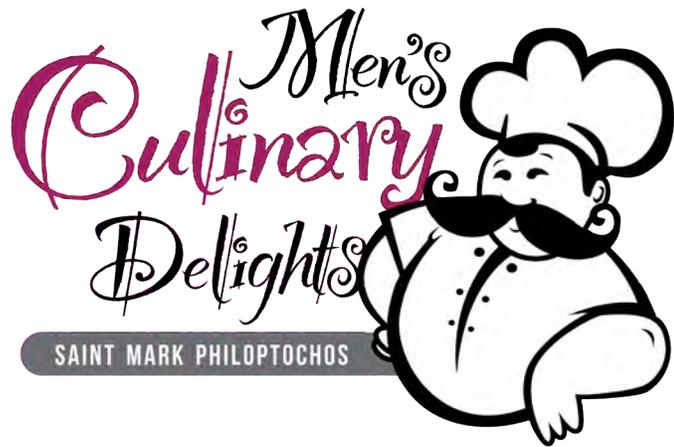


This September Saint Mark will resume its Bible Study, and Orthodox Discussion group "Synaxis."



This Fall, we will be examining Saint Paul's "prison letters": Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon (*the four books he wrote while under house arrest in Rome*) in our Bible Study every Tuesday at 7 pm (*after vespers at 6:30 pm*). Also, every Thursday at 11 am (*after Paraklesis at 10 am*) we will be gathering for our Synaxis discussions. This year the group will reading "Beginning to Pray" by Anthony Bloom. The book will be available in the Church Bookstore.





# CONTESTANT REGISTRATION

NOVEMBER 11, 2017

The "Men's Culinary Delights" cooking competition will take place in the Saint Mark Community Hall from 6-9 pm, November 11th. We ask that all contestants arrive before 5:30 pm to set up. Be prepared to present your dish and answer any questions about ingredients. Awards will be presented at 8:30 pm.

RETURN TO: 2100 NW 51ST STREET BOCA RATON, FL 33431 -OR- OFFICE@SAINTMARKBOCA.NET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Sweet  Savory  Appetizer

Thank you for participating in Saint Mark's third annual culinary competition. Please fill out the information provided and attach your sweet or savory dish recipe. Thank you for your participation.

May the best dish win!



## OUTREACH MINISTRY - A NEW FOCUS FOR 2017-2018

On Saturday morning, August 12 our Saint Mark Parish Council met to recap the very successful 2016-2017 year that was, and to set our goals for the 2017-2018 year to come. After an extensive look at our parish as a whole, the clergy and council members all agreed to make OUTREACH our focus for the next twelve months! This is a beautiful, yet pivotal moment in the life of Saint Mark. We recognize the blessings that we have received, but now also understand the opportunity we have to share them with our surrounding community here in South Florida. The responsibility of sharing our faith is the uncompromising and unmistakable calling of all Orthodox Christians, which began with Christ's great commission recorded in the Gospel account of Saint Matthew (28:16-20).

This new direction is not an empty promise, but one that we are taking extremely seriously. So much so, that as a result of this meeting our Outreach Committee scheduled a planning session to be held the following week. In fact, by the time you read this issue of "The Message," this committee meeting should have already taken place. The faithful members of this committee, along with the clergy and the parish council, will develop strategies and identify avenues in which we can not only make the surrounding area more aware of Saint Mark, but also expose them to the Truth and beautiful Traditions of the Orthodox faith. This will be accomplished by doing things as simple as enhancing our seasonal signage on Yamato Road, and participating in local charity events, and recreational sporting leagues. But also with our increased focus, our parish outreach can grow into things like sending teams from Saint Mark



on mission trips; participating in public interfaith forums; or even hosting open public events.

Whatever shape or scope our outreach endeavors take on, we will depend on the involvement of all of our families to ensure their success. Christ told His disciples that they were "the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:14). We at Saint Mark are the city on top of that hill, and we have seen the Light of Christ that can illumine the world if we chose to share it! Stay on the lookout for more announcements to come this year of ways you can help Saint Mark reach out and impact the lives of our neighbors here in Boca Raton and the surrounding areas.

## PHILOPTOCHOS - NIKI CORE

Spring and summer have continued to be a busy time for Philoptochos. At our final general meeting of the season held on May 1, the following women were acclaimed to the board: Mary Limperos, Maria Mercado, Maria Spiliopoulos, Barbara Tasiounis, Julie Vagelos.



President.....*Niki Core*  
 1st Vice President.....*Mary Limperos*  
 2nd Vice President.....*Maria Spiliopoulos*  
 Recording Secretary.....*Stella Ritsos*  
 Corresponding Secretary.....*Julie Vagelos*  
 Treasurer.....*Barbara Tasiounis*  
 Assistant Treasurer.....*Fran Papamichael*

We are thrilled to be lead by such an incredible assembly of women, and are proud to announce that they are already hard at work planning our upcoming season of philanthropy.

In June, the Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos held its biannual meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina. Women from across the Metropolis gathered for fellowship, spiritual enrichment, information and idea sharing. It was a most productive week on all counts.

We heard from speakers who are offering assistance to women veterans in crisis and VA Home Front, an organization that enables homeless veterans to find housing. There were additional discussions on projects we can implement in our own communities. One such program is Music and Memory, which is a simple yet amazing program to help people with Alzheimer's and dementia through the use of personalized music. Deacon Gavriilo Milkovich from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Raleigh spoke of numerous outreach programs he has instituted there.

On Friday, His Eminence announced the new Board of the Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos. Our new president is Irene Politis from Charlotte. Pam Parent and Presbytera Anastasia Leondis were appointed from Saint Mark. The Metropolis of Atlanta has the highest membership of all Philoptochos Metropolises, and Saint Mark has the honor of being the third largest chapter in our Metropolis.

### LOOKING FORWARD TO 2017-2018

The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Saint Mark has been blessed with the strong leadership of its past president, Pam Parent, and the encouraging support of Fr. Mark and Fr. Steven. Together with a hard-working Board, membership increased over the past few years to record numbers, and we hope to reach our goal of 200 or more members by February 2018.

We anticipate an exciting year with new initiatives (outreach in the community), as well as increased participation in our ever-popular events, such as the Men's Culinary on Saturday, November 11, and our Epiphany Luncheon on Sunday, January 7. Please mark your calendars and join us to share in the festivities and support our Philoptochos.

During the busy month of January, volunteers participate in the Festival by baking thousands of cookies and other pastries and donating all proceeds to Saint Mark. Everyone is welcome to come and

learn how to prepare our traditional Greek desserts, as well as to serve at the pastry booth during the Festival.

Each month our coffee hour proceeds are donated to different national and local charities. Everyone is encouraged to be very generous when they pick up their coffee and pastries so that we can continue the very worthy philanthropic commitments throughout the year.

There may be some members of Saint Mark who do not know how varied and extensive our commitments are during the year. The following are just a few of the monthly funds that are allocated to different worthwhile organizations:

<i>Children Medical Fund</i>	<i>Cancer Fund</i>
<i>Aid to Greece and Cyprus</i>	<i>Saint Basil's Academy</i>
<i>Hellenic College/ Holy Cross</i>	<i>Autism Fund</i>
<i>Ecumenical Patriarchate</i>	<i>Orthodox Christian Missions</i>
<i>Support a Mission Priest</i>	<i>And many others!...</i>

It is exciting to begin the new Ecclesiastical year with high expectations and many dedicated members who are willing to spend countless hours supporting Saint Mark and promoting our Orthodox faith through good works. Please join us – everyone is welcome!

## SAINT MARK CHOIR - VIRGINIA BARNES



After a couple months off, the Saint Mark Choir will be back in session on Sunday August 20! Our choir members would like to thank Sophia Christakis and Art Poly for directing our ecclesiastical music during the summer and all those who assisted her in chanted the Divine Liturgy while we were away. Thanks to this break, the choir is well rested and ready to get back to work! Thank you also to Manny Manos for representing the Saint Mark Choir at the Southeastern Choir Conference in June. It is wonderful to continue to support the conference, as others supported our efforts when we hosted last summer.

It is really easy to join the choir. No audition, no forms, no fees! We rehearse each Sunday at 9:15, and occasionally on Thursdays when needed. The Saint Mark Choir is growing, boasting a junior choir membership of twelve angelic voices, as well as strong men's and women's sections. Please contact Virginia Barnes if you would like to be part of this vibrant ministry.

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FOR ALL NEWS ON GOYA, JOY & MORE



# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

## JIMMY ASHMEN

Jimmy is a recent graduate of Dreyfoos School of the Arts. Throughout his four years, he won awards for solo and ensemble competitions and performed with all-state and all-district bands. He will pursue a double major in music and business at Florida State University. Jimmy has served as an acolyte co-captain at Saint Mark and was active in GOYA, Sunday Church School (with exemplary attendance) and Syrtaki. "I enjoy telling people of my apostolic faith and the Traditions of our ancestors."



## STAMATINA COPULOS

Stamatina was consistently on the Headmaster's List during her high school years at Saint Andrew's. She has taken AP and IB classes to earn the credits that will allow her to enroll at the University of Florida as a sophomore; she plans to major in journalism. Stamatina has been an active member of JOY, GOYA, Sunday Church School (with exemplary attendance), Syrtaki and is a veteran choir participant. Her love of the Orthodox faith is, as she stated in her essay, "...the core of my being and has always been the light of my path."



## VASI CHRISTAKIS

Vasi recently graduated from Boca Raton High School where she was a member of the National Honor Society, French Honor Society, and was the recipient of the Presidential Award for Academic Excellence. She plans to attend Florida Atlantic University to pursue a career in medicine. Vasi participated in JOY, GOYA, Sunday Church School, Syrtaki and credits Saint Mark and her Orthodox faith for her spiritual development: "Orthodoxy...will continue to guide me through my life and allow me to stay on the right path."



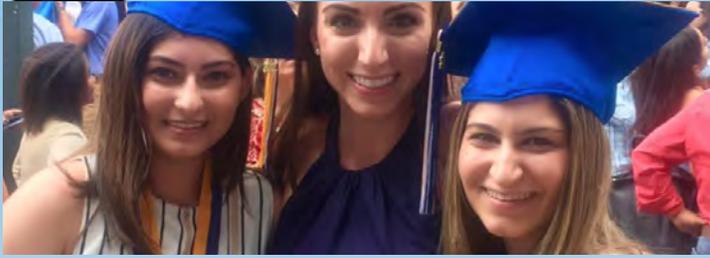
## ALYSSA DUROS

Alyssa recently graduated from Spanish River High School, where she was active in the marching band, the National Art Society, the Environmental Club, and was founder and President of the Spanish River Book Club. She will begin her undergraduate studies in June at the University of North Florida, majoring in biology, with a career plan to attend dental school at the University of Florida. Alyssa has been a Sunday Church School member and is an active participant in the Children's Miracle Network.



## ANNA GONEDES

As a student at Boca Raton High School, Anna was a member of the National Honor Society, psychology student of the year, co-founder and president of the Greek Club, and worked with elementary school students as an after-school counselor. She will continue her studies at Nova Southeastern University, where she will pursue a degree in pediatric nursing. What Anna enjoyed most during her years at Saint Mark was going to retreats and learning about the Orthodox faith. "An educated Orthodox Christian is a great instrument to answer questions and to make others understand our true faith."



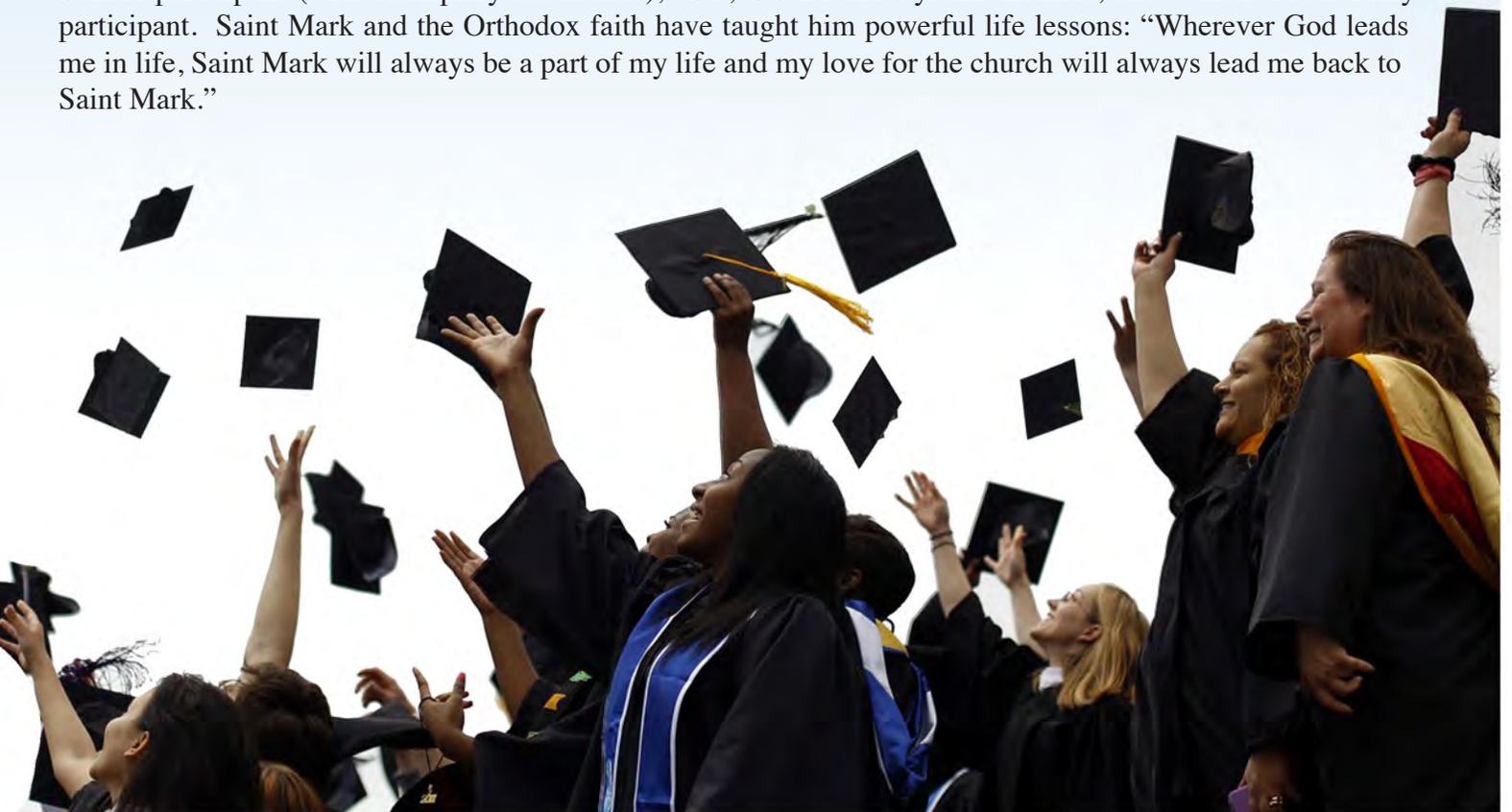
## IRINI & KONSTANTINA GUGUDI

Irini and Konstantina graduated in June from Cypress Bay High School, where they were both involved in DECA, the Photography Club, and Sign Language Club. During high school Irini and Konstantina developed a strong sense of humanitarian responsibility, which they will pursue in the fall at Florida Atlantic University. Irini will be majoring in

psychology, specifically geropsychology, to assist the elderly; while Konstantina hopes to serve the youth by majoring in child psychology. Both Irina and Konstantina have been involved with Sunday Church School, GOYA and several dance groups. Irini cites her relationships with the clergy as making “Saint Mark is the total package for me.” Konstantina similarly reflects on her “life-changing experience” at Saint Mark, commenting on how it has become for her an “environment that evokes Orthodoxy, love and fellowship.”

## MICHAEL SPILIOPOULOS

Michael recently graduated from Spanish River High School where he was a member of the National Honor Society and the National Business Honor Society. He completed AP electives required by the School's Entrepreneurship Academy and will begin his studies in Business Management this summer at the University of Central Florida. At Saint Mark, Michael has been involved as an acolyte co-captain, camp counselor, Sunday Church School participant (with exemplary attendance), JOY, GOYA and Syrtaki member, and Winter Youth Rally participant. Saint Mark and the Orthodox faith have taught him powerful life lessons: “Wherever God leads me in life, Saint Mark will always be a part of my life and my love for the church will always lead me back to Saint Mark.”



# ... NEW AMERICAN SAINTS GLORIFIED ...

## SAINT SEBASTIAN OF JACKSON & SAINT MARDARIJE OF LIBERTYVILLE

Recently the members of the Holy Assembly of Hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church announced the glorification of two clerics who served in North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries—Bishop Mardarije [Uskokovic] and Archimandrite Sebastian [Dabovich]. Both saints are being recognized as “preachers of the Gospel, God-pleasing servants of the holy life, and inspirers of many missionaries” for their pastoral labors in America and their homeland.

The glorification in the spring of 2015 came in response to a recommendation by the Episcopal Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America.

**SAINT SEBASTIAN** (depicted in the icon on the right) was born Jovan Dabovich in San Francisco, CA in 1863—in the midst of the US Civil war. His parents were Serbian immigrants from Sassovae. From his early youth he was devoted to the Church and spent much of his time at the city’s Holy Trinity Cathedral, where he later served as a reader and teacher. In 1884, he was assigned to assist at Archangel Michael Cathedral, Sitka, AK. Shortly thereafter, he was sent to Russia for training and formation as a missionary priest. After completing three years of studies at the Saint Petersburg and Kyiv Theological Academies, he was tonsured to monastic rank and ordained to the diaconate in 1887.

Returning to San Francisco, he served as a deacon at the cathedral and taught in the newly established pastoral school. On August 16, 1892, he was ordained to the priesthood and assigned to pursue missionary work in California and Washington. The following year, he succeeded Father [now Saint] Alexis Toth as rector of Saint Mary Church, Minneapolis, MN and taught at the Missionary School.

In 1894, Father Sebastian returned to California, where he established the first Serbian Orthodox parish in the US in Jackson, CA. Two years later, he was reassigned to San Francisco’s Holy Trinity Cathedral while continuing his missionary efforts in Jackson. In recognition of his abilities, Archbishop Tikhon assigned him as part of the North American Mission’s Administration. During this time he wrote a book titled *The Ritual, Services and Sacraments of the Holy Orthodox Church*. In 1902, he was transferred to Alaska, where he served as Dean of the Sitka Deanery.

With the development of additional Serbian parishes in the US, Archbishop Tikhon reassigned Father Sebastian to head the Serbian Mission in America in 1905. The Mission was based in Chicago, where Archimandrite Sebastian had organized and served as rector of Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Church. He continued to guide the Serbian Mission through July 1910, when at his own request he returned to missionary work. With the opening of Saint Platon Seminary, Tenafly, NJ in 1913, he served as a member of the faculty and also was involved in numerous conferences and discussions with non-Orthodox Christian confessions. In these meetings, he was sympathetic and understanding,

yet firm in his desire to reveal Orthodox Christianity as the fullness of truth and the Church of Christ.

While Archimandrite Sebastian was obviously a candidate for the episcopacy in America, he likewise felt the calling to minister in his ancestral Serbia. He served as a chaplain to the Serbian Army during the Balkan War and World War I. In 1916, he requested a release from the North American Mission to serve in Serbia, where he ministered for the remainder of his life. He fell asleep in the Lord on November 30, 1940 and was interred in the Monastery of Zicha by his friend and Father Confessor, Bishop Nikolai [Velimirovic].

**SAINT MARDARIJE** (depicted in the icon on the left) was born Ivan Uskokovic in Podgoritsa, Montenegro, in 1889. In 1907, he embraced monasticism at the Studenitsa Monastery and then relocated to Russia to study at the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy. After graduation, he was ordained by the Russian Orthodox Church and sent as a missionary to America.

In 1919, he was one of five Serbian Orthodox priests who participated in the Second All-American Sobor, held in Cleveland, OH in February 1919, at which time it was recommended that the Serbian Church in Belgrade advance him to the episcopacy to organize a Serbian Orthodox Diocese in America. Unfortunately, at this most chaotic time in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, it was impossible to secure the written blessing of Patriarch [now

Saint] Tikhon of Moscow. Later in 1919, Archimandrite Mardarije returned to Belgrade, where he was assigned as head of the Rakovitsa Monastery and principal of its monastic school. Subsequently, Bishop [now Saint] Nikolai [Velimirovic] of Ohrid was sent by Patriarch Dimitriye to administer the fledgling diocese. Having likewise returned to America, Archimandrite Mardarije served as Saint Nikolai’s Deputy for two years, and continued to administer the diocese after the latter’s return to Belgrade.

On April 26, 1926, Archimandrite Mardarije was consecrated to the episcopacy in Belgrade. Prior to his episcopal consecration, he had carried out most of the actual work of organizing the Serbian diocese. He also served as parish priest in Chicago and purchased with his personal funds the land for Saint Sava Monastery in suburban Libertyville.

From the moment of his return to America, Bishop Mardarije undertook a wide range of ministries. He did not spare himself, nor did he fear work, although he knew that he was gravely ill with an advancing case of tuberculosis. In 1927, he convened the first National Church Assembly of the Serbian Orthodox American-Canadian Diocese to address a variety of organizational issues. At a clergy conference held in Youngstown, OH in 1931, he renewed his appeal for all to work for the unity and good of the diocese. His kindness, patience and reluctance to use punitive measures resulted in a great measure of unity within the diocese by the time of his repose on December 12, 1935 at the age of 46 years. He was interred at Libertyville’s Saint Sava Monastery.





# SAINT MARK'S 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP



## GW17 - NICOLE PELEKANOS

*"Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."* - Rom. 12:10-11

It's hard to believe yet another awesome Saint Mark Summer Camp has come and gone. From June 12-16, the Church grounds were filled with the sights and sounds of children playing games, going down inflatable slides, doing crafts, and other activities.

This year's theme "Let Us Attend" helped the campers feel more connected with the most important event we attend every week:

the Divine Liturgy! To communicate this theme we used the idea of the "golden ticket" (ala Willy Wonka), and each day at camp the curriculum was inspired by things you need tickets to attend, movies, carnivals, sporting events, theme parks, etc.

This year was a groundbreaking year for our camp staff. Our senior GOYANs took on a greater role by serving as department heads for the various sessions of camp. Led by this amazing camp staff, our program featured field trips to the Wow Factory and Off the Wall trampoline center. The week ended on a high note with our traditional water day on Friday, which boasted a brand new addition this year, the dunk tank!!!! After successfully dunking their counselors, many of the camp-

ers lined up to be dunked themselves! But perhaps the biggest highlight of the week was our gift shop. Stemming from the "golden ticket" theme, the campers loved being able to earn tickets throughout the week to use in the gift shop ran by our amazing Arts and Crafts team.

With Father Steven leading our Orthodox Life classes every day, the campers never lost sight on what the Golden ticket really was for them, the beautiful opportunity to Attend, and worship with each other at Saint Mark. Additionally, the week would never be possible if it was not for our amazing Saint Mark Family, volunteers, office staff, and the spiritual guidance from our amazing priests. Thank you to all the campers, counselors, and parents for supporting this absolutely amazing ministry!!!!

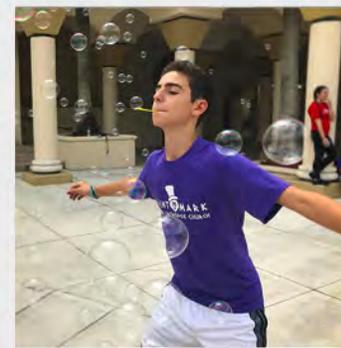
## INSTAGRAMS FROM OUR GW17 "LET US ATTEND"



This is what it's all about right here. Let us Attend...to our Faith! #gw17 #letusattend



"You talking to me!?" Our staff doesn't mess around! Who knew Brazilian Jiu Jitsu was so fun?



Look ma! No Hands! Christo working hard to catch all of our "Fizzy Lifting Drink" bubbles.



"Your turning Violet, Violet!" The Orange team rolling a teammate to the "Juicing room."

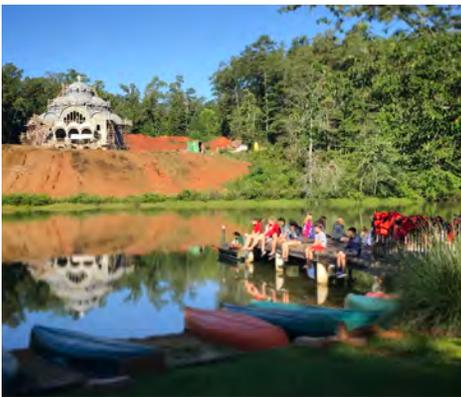


**SAINT MARK**  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
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### SAINT STEPHEN'S CAMP 2017 - KATERINA SPILIOPOULOS

Saint Stephen's Camp is undoubtedly the best place to spend a week of your summer. I was lucky enough to be one of the two dozen Goyans from Saint Mark who traveled many hours to the beautiful Diakonia Retreat Center (DRC) in South Carolina. We were joined at the DRC by GOYANs from various church communities located in other states, such as Georgia, SC, NC, and Tennessee. Immediately upon arrival, everyone is asked to give in their cellphone in order to ensure that you are truly able to separate from the outside world. Although this may sound like the worst possible thing for a teenager to do, it is actually one of the best decisions you will make all week.

Each fun and exhausting day is filled with morning vespers, Orthodox Life lessons with one of the attending priests, arts and crafts, swimming and canoeing in the lake, sports activities, ropes courses

with trust exercises in the woods, camp fires, and evening vespers and activities. While it is easy to simply list the many activities we enjoyed, it is hard to describe the transformation that we, as campers, experience when we strengthen our connection to God and develop life-long friendships with GOYANs from other churches. I believe that the time we spent on the ropes courses, blindfolded and having to trust that our partner would not let us fall, climbing a wall of hardships that you thought you could never overcome, and trusting that you will always be caught when you fall, in the infamous trust fall, brings to life how God is always with us in our lives helping us through all things we will encounter.

The experience at Saint Stephen's Camp is one that can never be matched and gives us the tools that we need to try to live our lives the way God intends for us to live it. I am looking forward to next year's camp experience to further strengthen my relationship with God.